

# LOVE/SICK

BY JOHN CARIANI



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LOVE/SICK received its world premiere production at Portland Stage Company (Anita Stewart, Artistic Director; Cami Barrantes, Managing Director) in Portland, Maine, opening on March 29, 2013. It was directed by Sally Wood; the set design was by Anita Stewart; the costume design was by Kathleen Brown; the lighting design was by Bryon Winn; the sound design was by Chris Fitze; the incidental music was by Julian Fleisher; the production stage manager was Shane Van Vleit. The play was comprised of ten short plays, and the cast was as follows:

OBSESSIVE IMPULSIVE ..... Abigail Killeen, David Mason  
 THE SINGING TELEGRAM ..... Torsten Hillhouse,  
    Patricia Buckley  
 WHAT?!? ..... David Mason, Torsten Hillhouse  
 THE ANSWER ..... Abigail Killeen, Torsten Hillhouse  
 UH-OH ..... David Mason, Patricia Buckley  
 LUNCH AND DINNER ..... Abigail Killeen, Torsten Hillhouse  
 CHICKEN ..... Abigail Killeen, David Mason  
 WHERE WAS I? ..... Abigail Killeen, Patricia Buckley  
 FORGOT ..... David Mason, Patricia Buckley  
 DESTINY ..... Patricia Buckley, Torsten Hillhouse

LOVE/SICK had its first developmental production at High Point University (Ed Simpson, Chair) in High Point, North Carolina, opening on September 30, 2010. It was directed by Jay Putnam; the set and lighting designs were by Matthew Emerson; the costume design was by Ami Shupe; the sound design was by Daniel Horney; the production stage manager was Amanda Mayes. The play was comprised of eight short plays, and the cast was as follows:

OBSESSIVE IMPULSIVE ..... Anna-Parsons Charles,  
    Dan Moldovan  
 THE SINGING TELEGRAM .... Maggie Jo Saylor, Daniel Harr  
 THE ANSWER ..... Marie Ventrone, Nathan Ruffin  
 UH-OH ..... Jennifer Arnold, Cody Russell  
 LUNCH AND DINNER ..... Cate Lightburn, Nathan Ruffin  
 CHICKEN ..... Maggie Jo Saylor, Cody Russell  
 FORGOT ..... Marie Ventrone, Daniel Harr  
 DESTINY ..... Anna-Parsons Charles, Dan Moldovan

LOVE/SICK had its second developmental production at Ball State University (William Jenkins, Chair) in Muncie, Indiana, opening on November 1, 2012. It was directed by Eva Patton; the set design was by Bri Kuffell; the costume design was by Tyler Phillips; the lighting design was by Adam Kelly; the sound design was by Bryan Martina; the production stage manager was Caitie Noller. The play was comprised of ten short plays, and the cast was as follows:

OBSESSIVE IMPULSIVE ..... Cole Abell, Nancy Hale  
THE SINGING TELEGRAM ..... Katie Stofko, Edric Mitchell  
WHAT?!? ..... Jon Whitney, Brad Root  
THE ANSWER ..... Bradford Reilly, Kara Schoenhofer  
UH-OH ..... Amber Price, Jack McFarlane  
LUNCH AND DINNER ..... Macie Tonn, Jon Whitney  
CHICKEN ..... Brad Root, Cynthia Nesbit  
WHERE WAS I? ..... Sarah Paradise, Kara Schoenhofer  
FORGOT ..... Cole Abell, Katie Stofko  
DESTINY ..... Bradford Reilly, Macie Tonn

LOVE/SICK received a professional developmental production at Shadowland Theatre (Brendan Burke, Artistic Director) in Ellenville, New York, opening on June 21, 2013. It was directed by John Cariani and Brendan Burke; the set design was by Drew Francis; the costume design was by Holly Budd; the lighting design was by Chris Hallenbeck; the sound design was by Jeff Knapp; the incidental music was by Julian Fleisher; the production stage manager was Brittney Green. The play was comprised of ten short plays, and the cast was as follows:

OBSESSIVE IMPULSIVE ..... Katie Hartke, David Mason  
THE SINGING TELEGRAM ..... Daniel Robert Sullivan,  
Kathy McCafferty  
WHAT?!? ..... Daniel Robert Sullivan, David Mason  
THE ANSWER ..... Katie Hartke, Daniel Robert Sullivan  
UH-OH ..... Kathy McCafferty, David Mason  
LUNCH AND DINNER ..... Daniel Robert Sullivan,  
Katie Hartke  
CHICKEN ..... Katie Hartke, David Mason  
FORGOT ..... David Mason, Kathy McCafferty



WHERE WAS I? ..... Katie Hartke, Kathy McCafferty  
DESTINY ..... Kathy McCafferty, Daniel Robert Sullivan

LOVE/SICK received a professional developmental production at the Public Theatre (Christopher Schario, Executive/Artistic Director; Janet Mitchko, Co-Artistic Director) in Lewiston, Maine, opening on October 1, 2013. It was directed by Christopher Schario; the set design was by Dan Bilodeau; the costume design was by Hannah J. Brown; the lighting design was by Bart Garvey; the sound design was by Larry French; the production stage manager was Lisa Bragdon. The play was comprised of ten short plays, and the cast was as follows:

OBSESSIVE IMPULSIVE ..... William Peden, Heather Dilly  
THE SINGING TELEGRAM ... Sarah Corey, Torsten Hillhouse  
WHAT?!? ..... William Peden, Torsten Hillhouse  
THE ANSWER ..... Heather Dilly, William Peden  
UH-OH ..... Sarah Corey, Torsten Hillhouse  
LUNCH AND DINNER ..... Heather Dilly, Torsten Hillhouse  
CHICKEN ..... Sarah Corey, William Peden  
WHERE WAS I? ..... Heather Dilly, Sara Corey  
FORGOT ..... William Peden, Heather Dilly  
DESTINY ..... Sarah Corey, Torsten Hillhouse

LOVE/SICK received a professional developmental production at Half Moon Theatre Company (Molly Katz, Executive Director; Kristy Grimes, Managing Director; Patty Wineapple, Producer) in Poughkeepsie, New York, opening on November 1, 2013. It was directed by Christopher V. Edwards; the set design and props were by Aaron Ethan Green; the costume design was by Charlotte Palmer; the lighting design was by Jared H. Goldstein; the sound design was by Jeff Knapp; the production stage manager was Michael Castillo. The play was comprised of ten short plays, and the cast was as follows:

OBSESSIVE IMPULSIVE ..... Jennifer Skura, Jack Corcoran  
THE SINGING TELEGRAM ..... Jack Corcoran, Shona Tucker  
WHAT?!? ..... Jack Corcoran, Greg Skura  
THE ANSWER ..... Jennifer Skura, Greg Skura  
UH-OH ..... Amy Lemon, Steven Patterson

LUNCH AND DINNER ..... Jennifer Skura, Jack Corcoran  
 CHICKEN ..... Shona Tucker, Greg Skura  
 WHERE WAS I? ..... Amy Lemon, Shona Tucker  
 FORGOT ..... Steven Patterson, Amy Lemon  
 DESTINY ..... Shona Tucker, Steven Patterson

LOVE/SICK received a professional developmental production at TheaterWorks Hartford (Rob Ruggiero, Artistic Director; Nicole LaFlair Nieves, General Manager) in Hartford, Connecticut, opening on May 29, 2014. It was directed by Amy Saltz; the set design was by Michael Schweickhardt; the costume design was by Harry Nadal; the lighting design was by Mary Jo Dondlinger; the sound design was by Fitz Patton; the production stage manager was Kate Cudworth. The play was comprised of ten short plays, and the cast was as follows:

OBSESSIVE IMPULSIVE ..... Laura Woodward, Bruch Reed  
 THE SINGING TELEGRAM ..... Chris Thorn, Pascale Armand  
 WHAT!?!? ..... Chris Thorn, Bruch Reed  
 THE ANSWER ..... Laura Woodward, Chris Thorn  
 UH-OH ..... Pascale Armand, Bruch Reed  
 LUNCH AND DINNER ..... Laura Woodward, Bruch Reed  
 CHICKEN ..... Pascale Armand, Bruch Reed  
 FORGOT ..... Chris Thorn, Laura Woodward  
 WHERE WAS I? ..... Laura Woodward, Pascale Armand  
 DESTINY ..... Laura Woodward, Chris Thorn

LOVE/SICK was given a professional developmental production by Royal Family Productions (Christine Henry, Artistic Director) at the Royal Family Performing Arts Space (Evan Storey and Andy Theodorou, Producers) in New York City. It was directed by Chris Henry; the movement direction was by JoAnn M. Hunter; the set design was by Shannon Rednour; the costume design was by Lux Haac; the lighting design was by Lucrecia Briceno; the sound design was by Danny Erdberg; the incidental music was by Barton Kuebler, Lars Jacobsen, and Chris Henry; the production stage manager was Adrian Peña. The play was in its current form, and the cast was as follows:

MAN, BEN, BILL, KEVIN ..... Debargo Sanyal  
 WOMAN, CELIA, KELLY, JILL, LIZ, EMILY ..... Dee Roscioli  
 SINGING TELEGRAM MAN,  
 ANDY, KEITH, MARK, JAKE .. Justin Hagan and John Cariani  
 LOUISE, SARAH, ABBIE ..... Simone Harrison  
 SUPERCENTER DANCERS ..... Jenn Aédo, Rachel Geisler,  
 Stephanie Israelson, Jolina Javier,  
 Schuyler Midgett

LOVE/SICK received a professional developmental production at Arc Stages (Adam David Cohen, Artistic Director; Marlene Canapi, Managing Director; Ann Shankman, President) in Pleasantville, New York, opening on September 25, 2015. It was directed by Stephanie Kovacs Cohen; the set design and props were by Ann Shankman; the costume design was by Libby Brennescholtz; the lighting design was by Adam Cohen; the sound design was by Stephanie Kovacs Cohen; the production stage manager was Emily C. Rolston. The play was in its current form, and the cast was as follows:

MAN, ANDY, BILL, MARK ..... Collin Smith  
 WOMAN, CELIA, KELLY, JILL, ABBIE ..... Katie Hartke  
 SINGING TELEGRAM MAN,  
 BEN, KEITH, KEVIN, JAKE ..... David Lanson  
 LOUISE, SARAH, LIZ, EMILY ..... Caroline Kinsolving

## THE PLAYS

LOVE/SICK is a one-act, nine-play cycle about love and loss—but mostly loss. Each play has its own arc and tells the story of a couple at a crossroads in their relationship. Since each relationship is more advanced than the previous relationship, a larger arc emerges and the individual plays work together to create a satisfying whole—one that chronicles the lifecycle of a typical relationship from meeting through divorce...and afterwards.

### **The plays:**

1. “Obsessive Impulsive”
2. “The Singing Telegram”
3. “What?!?”
4. “The Answer”
5. “Uh-Oh”
6. “Lunch and Dinner”
7. “Forgot”
8. “Where Was I?”
9. “Destiny”

LOVE/SICK works best as an 85-minute intermissionless event. If an intermission is desired, please take it after the fifth play, “Uh-Oh.”

## CHARACTERS

### 1. **OBSESSIVE IMPULSIVE**

A WOMAN and a MAN who fall in love at first sight.

### 2. **THE SINGING TELEGRAM**

A SINGING TELEGRAM MAN who delivers a singing telegram to an enthusiastic woman, LOUISE OVERBEE.

### 3. **WHAT?!?**

BEN, a guy who is surprised that he has fallen in love, and ANDY, the sweet guy he has fallen in love with.

### 4. **THE ANSWER**

KEITH and CELIA, a groom and bride.

### 5. **UH-OH**

SARAH, a woman with questions, and BILL, her content husband of a year and a half.

### 6. **LUNCH AND DINNER**

KELLY and MARK, a successful couple, married for seven years.

### 7. **FORGOT**

JILL, a woman who wants more than she has, and KEVIN, her husband of nine years, who is happy with what he has.

### 8. **WHERE WAS I?**

ABBIE, a hard-working stay-at-home mom, and LIZ, her hard-working wife.

### 9. **DESTINY**

JAKE, a recently divorced man, and EMILY, a recently divorced woman.

## **CHARACTER BREAKDOWN**

LOVE/SICK is a play for four actors (2M, 2W). With a cast of four, all actors should be in their 30s/early 40s.

LOVE/SICK can also be a play for as many as eighteen actors (9M, 9W). Using a larger cast affords an opportunity to use actors of all ages. Since the characters in the earlier plays are quite innocent, actors playing roles in the first few plays can be in their 20s and early 30s. As the play progresses, the characters become more worldly, so actors cast in the later plays should be late-30s and could be in their 40s and—in the last play—in their 50s.

The cast should reflect the increasing diversity in America and its suburbs.

## **TIME**

7:30 P.M. on a Friday night in June.

## **PLACE**

An alternate suburban reality.

## NOTES FOR ACTORS, DIRECTORS, AND READERS

*(If you are involved in a production of LOVE/SICK, please see the additional notes at the back of this volume.)*

F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote, “The sentimental person thinks things will last—the romantic person has a desperate confidence that they won’t.” I am a romantic. And so are the characters in LOVE/SICK. They are desperately confident that things are going to go bad. But they fight like heck to make sure that they don’t.

LOVE/SICK is a romantic play. It is not a sentimental play.

LOVE/SICK is full of highs and lows. Play them fully. Soar. Crash. Repeat.

LOVE/SICK is a realistically absurd play. Play it for real. Even though it’s absurd.

LOVE/SICK is a very funny tragedy. Make sure it’s very funny. And very sad.

### Notes on Punctuation:

You will see some unusual punctuation in the text.

> at the end of a line means keep talking—don’t wait for the other actor’s line.

// inside an actor’s line is a signal to the next speaker that s/he should start speaking his/her next line.

A dash (—) at the end of a speech means that the next speaker cuts off the current speaker.

An ellipsis (...) at the end of a speech means that the character speaking trails off into thought. The next speaker should not interrupt, but should respond to the trailing off.

Commas after end punctuation are to encourage pace.

Text in brackets [ ] is not to be spoken—it is there for information.

The stage direction (*Receives and processes.*) means just that. It’s not a full beat, but a sorting through of what’s going on or what’s just been said.

# LOVE/SICK

## OBSESSIVE IMPULSIVE

*It's 7:30 on a Friday night in late June in an alternate suburban reality. Lights up on the SuperCenter.\* A Man and a Woman push shopping carts through the SuperCenter consulting shopping lists. This may seem pathetic (it is a Friday night, after all), but places like Walmart and Costco are the places where people are most likely to (almost) find love in over 20 states.\*\* In a flash, the Man and the Woman catch sight of each other, gasp (because they take each other's breath away), rush to each other, and, from out of nowhere, kiss—a big, long, sloppy, passionate—at least eight seconds!—kiss. They finally break, horrified by what they have just done.*

MAN and WOMAN. *(In unison, to each other. [Note: This must be simultaneous and rapid-fire. Actors: In these unison sequences, you're speaking and listening and responding—all at the same time. Make sure that while you speak, you are also listening and responding to each question/statement. You're taking in the same exact information you're providing—at the exact same time.])* Oh, my gosh!!! I am so sorry!—No, it's not you!— I know that's not an appropriate thing for a person to do, and I can totally explain why I just did that: You see, I'm obsessive impulsive, and— *(Each receives and processes what the other just said and then asks:)* WHAT?!? *(Each quickly receives and processes the question and then answers.)* I'm obsessive impulsive! *(Each quickly receives and processes this extraordinary information—that someone else in the world might actually be obsessive impulsive!—*

\* The SuperCenter is like a Walmart or a Target or a Costco.

\*\* <http://flowingdata.com/2013/02/22/map-of-craigslist-missed-connections/>



*and then responds.*) No you're not! It's an extremely rare disorder!, You can't possibly be obsessive impulsive! (*Each quickly receives and processes this information and then responds.*) Well—I am! (*Each quickly receives and processes this response and then asks.*) You are?! (*Each quickly receives and processes this question and then answers.*) YES! (*Each quickly receives and processes this answer and then honestly and excitedly asks:*) Are you sure? (*Each quickly receives and processes this question and then answers.*) YES!! (*Each quickly receives and processes this answer and then responds.*) No! No—no—no, you're probably mistaking it with being obsessive compulsive— (*Each quickly receives and processes; then, incredulous and excited:*) What?—No! I'm not [mistaking it with being obsessive compulsive]!, I'm not [mistaking it with being obsessive compulsive]! I'm obsessive *impulsive*, I'm obsessive *impulsive*! >

WOMAN. I've been diagnosed!!!

MAN. Me, too!!!

WOMAN. Clinically!!!

MAN. Me, too!

WOMAN. And that's why I just did what I just did to you in the middle of // the SuperCenter!

MAN. Yeah, and why I just did what I just did, I'm obsessive impulsive too!

WOMAN. Have you been diagnosed?!?

MAN. Yes!!

WOMAN. Clinically?!?

MAN. Yes!!! (*They kiss—big, long kiss—at least five seconds. They break.*)

MAN and WOMAN. (*In unison; they're breathless.*) I'm sorry!... It's just that— (*Quick earth-shattering discovery.*) —I think I've fallen in love with you at first sight! (*Joy!*) For real?!? Yeah!! Me too!! >

WOMAN. And I keep wanting to kiss you! >

MAN. Me, too!

WOMAN. And I'm just acting on that impulse! >

MAN. Yes!

WOMAN. (*Breaking away.*) And that's something I'm *not* supposed to do. >

MAN. Yeah, I know, I know!

WOMAN. As an obsessive impulsive person, I have to guard *against* that, // acting on *impulse* like that.

MAN. I know, me too, yeah! There's a lot of stuff that, as an obsessive impulsive person, that you've gotta guard against doing—acting on, >

MAN and WOMAN. and falling in love—

WOMAN. Yeah!

MAN and WOMAN. —especially at first sight—

WOMAN. —yeah—is one of those things, because of the consequences, >

MAN. Yeah!

WOMAN. you have to weigh the consequences, // and—

MAN. Yeah!, And as a clinically diagnosed obsessive impulsive, I'm somehow lacking that capacity to discern consequences.

WOMAN. Exactly— >

MAN and WOMAN. (*In unison. [Note: What follows is a recitation of the suggested course of treatment for the disorder, and its purpose is to explain to the other person that there's hope for improvement. The meaning here is, "I could get better!"*]) But Obsessive Impulsive Disorder is treatable through proper diet and exercise, therapy and counseling, medication, and having a loved one watch over you every single moment of the day, >

MAN. (*Indicating where his brother is.*) my brother's over in automotive.

WOMAN. (*Indicating where her sister is.*) my sister's over in home improvement.

MAN and WOMAN. (*In unison; amazed.*) Wow. You really do have it, don't you? (*They kiss again with reckless abandon—six-second kiss. Then:*)

WOMAN. (*Breaking away; horrified and extremely apologetic.*) I'm sorry!

MAN. Yeah, me // too.

WOMAN. That was a lapse, // and >

MAN. Yeah, you don't have to explain!

WOMAN. lapses are gonna happen with me, because my OIR—my // Obsessive Impulsive Ratio—

MAN. Obsessive Impulsive Ratio! I know!, You don't have to spell it out for me!, I understand!

WOMAN. Well, it's very high, so what keeps happening [all this kissing]—is gonna keep happening, 'cause I've only been in treatment for three years // and—

MAN. Well, that's not a real long time! I've only been in for seven and my OIR isn't exactly low!

WOMAN. Well, what is it?

MAN. One to thirty-three.\*

\* This is the written-out version of the ratio 1:33.

WOMAN. (*Very impressed.*) You have an Obsessive Impulsive Ratio of one to *thirty-three*!?!  
MAN. (*A little proud.*) Yeah.  
WOMAN. That's *amazing*! >  
MAN. Thanks...  
WOMAN. Wow!, So for every thirty-three things that you think of to do, that you just...*wanna* do, // you only do—  
MAN. Yeah, I only do one now, due largely to the diet and exercise regimen, the therapy and counseling, the medication, and my brother.  
WOMAN. Well, that's just great.  
MAN. Yeah, but you know, I used to be a one to one!  
WOMAN. No!  
MAN. Yup.  
WOMAN. Me, too!  
MAN. Really?  
WOMAN. Yeah! I did *everything* I thought of to do.  
MAN. You'd *think* a thing, you'd *do* it.  
WOMAN. Yes!  
MAN. Exhausting, isn't it?  
WOMAN. You have no idea.  
MAN. I think I do!  
WOMAN. Oh! You do!  
MAN. Because I understand!!  
WOMAN. You understand!!  
MAN. I understand!!! >  
MAN and WOMAN. (*In unison.*) You understand! She/he *understands*!!! (*Jumping up and down and joyfully proclaiming to the world.*) SHE/HE UNDERSTANDS ME!!!! (*Mortified freeze.*) Oh-my-gosh! (*To each other, mortified.*) I'm so sorry about that! I just wanted to jump up and shout to the whole wide world that you understand me because no one ever has before! Who are you?!? Where did you come from?!? YOU! ARE! AWESOME!! (*Into a crazy kiss—that takes them to the floor and all over each other—twelve seconds. They break. Frozen, horrified little beat.*) Oh-my-gosh! I'm sorry! (*They get up, collect themselves, check out the store to make sure no one saw, and apologize to other shoppers who may have seen them.*) Sorry! >  
MAN. Sorry! Sorry...  
WOMAN. Sorry about that. (*Relief.*) I don't think anyone saw— (*She spots her sister.*)  
MAN. Yeah, we're clear!

WOMAN. Oh-my-gosh! >

MAN. What?

WOMAN. I think my sister saw me!—I have to go! (*She starts to go.*)

MAN. No—no—no, // don't go!

WOMAN. No—she only lets me come to the SuperCenter on Friday nights when it seems like I'm getting better, and this is *not* better— (*She realizes that her sister didn't see!*) Wait—wait—wait!

MAN. What?

WOMAN. She's...going into *electronics!!!*

MAN. Oh!

WOMAN. She didn't *see!!!*

MAN. All right!! So stay!!!

WOMAN. All right! (*She suddenly kisses the Man quickly.*) Sorry!

MAN. No! [Don't be!] (*He kisses the Woman—and the kiss almost becomes tender. He suddenly breaks away.*) I'm so sorry I keep doing that!

WOMAN. No—it's me! It's me! My OIR is only one to thirteen— you're the one at one to thirty-three! // It's me!

MAN. Hey—hey—hey! Don't compare! You've only been in treatment less than half as long as me—you're doin' great. This is just a rough patch!

WOMAN. I don't know—

MAN. Check this out: There's a guy who's been in treatment for thirteen years—not even twice as long as me—and he has an OIR of one to one billion two hundred and seven million nine hundred and nineteen thousand six hundred and forty-six.

WOMAN. (*In awe.*) Really.

MAN. Yeah.

WOMAN. So he's...normal.

MAN. Yeah. He doesn't do *anything* anymore.

WOMAN. Wow.

MAN. Yeah. So let him inspire you. Stick to the program. It's really good. It's really helped me get my life together. (*He suddenly kisses the Woman; he breaks away, upset.*) Argh—even though right now it feels like everything's falling apart. >

WOMAN. I know!—

MAN. (*Honest and true.*) Because I really do think I fell in love with you the second I saw you!

WOMAN. Me, too. (*She kisses the Man quick.*) And, since then, I

# LOVE/SICK

by John Cariani

2-9M, 2-9W (doubling, flexible casting)

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